

FERGUSON'S MOTION PRECIPITATES CRISIS ON CHIPPAWA PROBE

Premier Drury Withdraws Motion to Allow Tory Leader to "Test Feeling of House" on Question of Committee v. Commission Inquiry

MEMBERS' OPINIONS SHOWN IN DEBATE

Premier Drury told the Legislature yesterday that before commissions are issued to the members of the Royal Commission that is to investigate the expenditures of the building of the Chippawa Canal the names will be announced to the House, and the House will have an opportunity of pronouncing upon them. At the same time, he said, the Government would not permit any "mauling" of the names.

The Premier's announcement came as the result of a question put by Hon. G. Howard Ferguson, and it precipitated a discussion, which lasted all afternoon, as to the advantages and disadvantages of a Royal Commission, as compared with a Committee of the House. The net results of a debate that was at times exciting are as follows:

Test Feeling of House.

The Premier consented to remove his notice of motion from the order paper calling for a committee of the House to investigate Hydro expenditures, so that Mr. Ferguson may place a similar one there, "to test the feeling of the House."

W. H. Casselman, U.F.O. member for Dundas, announced that he was in favor of an investigation by a committee of the House, and opposed to a Royal Commission.

Wellington Hay, Liberal Leader, stood by his original suggestion of a House committee, and still favors it.

Messrs. R. L. Brackin, West Kent; Sam Clarke, West Northumberland; Z. Mageau, Sturgeon Falls, and J. W. Curry, Southeast Toronto, all Liberals, in their speeches, signified their opposition to a committee of the House, as against a Royal Commission.

Government's Crucial Test.

The whole discussion came up "before the orders of the day were called," and upon a motion to adjourn the House. As a consequence,

when the debate ended there was nothing to vote on, but some indication was given as to how the members will line up on Mr. Ferguson's motion for a House committee, which motion will bring the Government face to face with probably the most solidly arrayed opposition it has met with in its career.

Mr. Ferguson said he had read a Press despatch intimating that M. J. Haney and Brig.-Gen. Mitchell would be members of the Royal Commission to investigate Hydro expenditures. Mr. Ferguson said it seemed rather remarkable that the Premier should take this course without the consent of the House, if he had decided on such a course. He thought the Prime Minister should give an undertaking to the House that before any action was taken on the matter the House should be consulted.

Should Inform House.

The House was entitled to know, said Mr. Ferguson, what course the Government was going to adopt. He reviewed the history of the proposed investigation, recalling that the Premier had put a notice of motion on the order paper. "The Prime Minister should make clear, and definitely state to us, what course he intends to take," said Mr. Ferguson, who took again the position that the tribunal ought to be selected by the House.

Premier Drury replied that the Government was prepared to take the responsibility. It could not arrive at its conclusions in a moment. The Government had come to the conclusion that the investigation could not be carried on by a committee of the House during the session.

"The personnel of the commission has not yet been decided upon, and any announcements to that effect are premature, and come with no authority," he said.

May Not "Maul" Commissioners.

Before the commission was issued the Government would announce to the House the members of the commission. "We will do that because I believe that to be the democratic practice, and not that the Government will be prepared to have the personnel of that commission mauled in the House."

Mr. Ferguson then asked if the Prime Minister would remove his notice of motion found on the order paper, "that I may place a motion on the order paper and test the feeling of the House."

"All right," said Mr. Drury.

J. C. Tolmie, Windsor, said he regretted the appointment of a Royal Commission. After reviewing Col. Carmichael's statement in the House on a former occasion, he said: "It seems to me a committee of the House is the proper party to make an investigation of that kind." The